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Energy Secretary Abraham Welcomes College Students Who Will Build Solar Village on National Mall in Washington, DC

14 Teams to Compete in Department of Energy's First Solar Decathlon

WASHINGTON, D.C. – College students around the country are completing 14 custom-designed solar-powered homes, and within a few days each house will be transported to the nation's capital for the U. S. Department of Energy's (DOE) first-ever Solar Decathlon.

The Solar Decathlon is a team competition among universities to design and build the most energy-efficient solar-powered homes, being held on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., from Sept. 26 to Oct. 5. To win the Solar Decathlon, a team must blend aesthetics and modern conveniences with maximum energy production and efficiency.

"The Department of Energy is proud to sponsor the first-ever Solar Decathlon, a university competition that brings together our nation's brightest minds to demonstrate practical ways of producing and using energy efficiently in the home," Secretary of Energy Spencer Abraham said. "President Bush and I are committed to helping students and consumers make winning decisions about how they use energy. Because when we power our lives with clean energy, we protect our own future. And when we protect our future, we are all winners."

Sponsors of the Solar Decathlon, in addition to DOE, include BP Solar, The Home Depot, EDS, the American Institute of Architects (AIA) and DOE's National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL).

"Each of the unique homes that will comprise the Solar Village on the National Mall marks a significant step forward in innovative residential design, and advanced, energy-efficient engineering," Secretary Abraham added. "These exciting new concepts demonstrate that we can have comfortable and appealing homes that use only energy from the sun. That's an important contribution to our nation's energy security and to our environment."

Each house, limited to roughly 500 square feet for purposes of the competition, will be judged on 10 criteria to determine which most efficiently employs solar energy for heating, cooling, hot water, lighting, appliances, computers and charging an electric car. The teams will compete in the 10 contests simultaneously.

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A jury of world-renowned architects will evaluate the attractiveness, livability and effectiveness of each home's design, while experts from DOE and NREL will measure each home's energy production and use.

The Solar Decathlon gives architecture and engineering students practical experience with the design and construction of solar powered, energy efficient buildings. DOE provided each team with a \$5,000 stipend toward the construction of their solar house. The teams are raising the rest of the money they need to design, construct and transport the houses to Washington, D.C.

The Solar Decathlon will be open to the public. Exhibits with information on each team's home, the contest and renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies will be adjacent to the Solar Decathlon village on the Mall between 4th Street and 7th Street and between the Smithsonian National Air & Space Museum and the west building of the National Gallery of Art.

BP Solar, one of the world's leading solar electric companies, manufactures, designs, markets and installs a wide range of crystalline silicon and new generation thin film solar electric products and systems. With nearly 20 percent of the global market and product deployed in more than 160 countries, BP Solar offers a range of products and solutions for residential, commercial and industrial remote and grid-connected power needs. In 2001, it reported revenues of approximately \$240 million, and produced more than 55 megawatts of power equipment.

Founded in 1978, The Home Depot is the world's largest home improvement specialty retailer and the largest retailer of energy conservation products, with fiscal 2001 sales of \$53.6 billion. The company employs more than 300,000 associates, and has more than 1,450 stores in 49 states Puerto Rico, seven Canadian provinces, and Mexico. The company for the second year in a row was named sixth Most Admired Company in America by Fortune Magazine, which has also ranked it as America's Most Admired Specialty Retailer for eight consecutive years. Its stock is traded on the New York Stock Exchange and is included in the Dow Jones Industrial Average and Standard & Poor's 500 Index.

EDS, the leading global services company, provides strategy, implementation, business transformation and operational solutions for clients managing the business and technology complexities of the digital economy. EDS brings together the world's best technologies to address critical client business imperatives. It helps clients eliminate boundaries, collaborate in new ways, establish their customers' trust and continuously seek improvement. EDS, with its management consulting subsidiary, A.T. Kearney, serves the world's leading companies and governments in 60 countries. EDS reported revenues of \$21.5 billion in 2001. The company's stock is traded on the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE: EDS) and the London Stock Exchange. Learn more at www.eds.com

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Since 1875, the American Institute of Architects has represented the professional interests of America's architects. Through education, government advocacy, community redevelopment and public outreach activities, the AIA and its 70,000 members work to achieve a higher standard of professionalism for architects while expressing their commitment to excellence in design and livability in our nation's buildings and cities.

NREL is a DOE national laboratory managed by Midwest Research Institute, Battelle and Bechtel. In addition to its work in solar photovoltaics and energy-efficient buildings, the lab is a leading center for research into wind energy, plant- and waste-derived fuels and chemicals, advanced vehicle design, geothermal energy and hydrogen fuel cells. Visit NREL online at www.nrel.gov.

For more on the Solar Decathlon, see <http://www.solardecathlon.org>

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